

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2867

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Regarding expansion of WSU Tri-Cities into a four-year institution.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Haler, Grant, Hankins, Cox, Sells, Roberts, Fromhold, Armstrong, Walsh, Skinner and Newhouse).

**House Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Education**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

### **Background:**

In 1989, the Legislature established five branch campuses in Washington's growing urban areas, to be operated by the state's two public research universities. The branch campuses included Washington State University (WSU) Tri-Cities. The campuses were authorized to offer only upper-division and graduate education programs, in collaboration with local community and technical colleges. The mission of the branch campuses, as established by statute, is to expand access to higher education and contribute to regional economic development through collaboration with community and technical colleges.

In 2005, the Legislature directed WSU Tri-Cities to expand its upper division capacity for transfer students and its graduate capacity and programs, while continuing to provide innovative coadmission and coenrollment options with Columbia Basin College. The Legislature also authorized WSU Tri-Cities, beginning in the fall of 2006, to begin offering lower-division courses linked to specific majors in fields not addressed by the local community colleges.

Additionally, the 2005 legislation authorized WSU Tri-Cities to develop a bachelor's degree program in biotechnology and to admit freshman and sophomores to that program directly (as opposed to through coadmission or coenrollment agreements with community colleges). The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) must approve the biotechnology program before WSU Tri-Cities may provide it. To date, WSU Tri-Cities has not requested the HECB's approval of such a program.

### **Summary:**

The WSU Tri-Cities is directed to examine resources available at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and to develop a plan regarding: (1) areas of need in higher education that exist in southeastern Washington, and (2) how WSU Tri-Cities may best develop into a

four-year institution. The WSU Tri-Cities must submit its plan to the Legislature by November 30, 2006.

Beginning in the fall of 2007, WSU Tri-Cities may admit lower-division students directly into programs beyond the biotechnology field that were identified in the campus' plan as being in high need in southeastern Washington. Any new programs must be approved by the HECB. By adding new programs and admitting lower division students, WSU Tri-Cities is directed to develop into a four-year institution.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	97	1
Senate	44	0

**Effective:** June 7, 2006